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cycle. The 603, available in 50-, 66-, and 75-MHz versions, executes two instructions per clock cycle. The 604, available in 50-, 75-, and 100-MHz versions, executes four instructions per clock cycle. The 620, available in 75-, 100-, and 125-MHz versions, also executes four instructions per clock cycle. *PowerPC* is a registered trademark of IBM. *See also* microprocessor, RISC.

power supply An electrical device that transforms standard wall-outlet electricity (115–120 volts AC in the United States) into the lower voltages (typically 5 to 12 volts DC) required by computer systems. Personal computer power supplies are rated by wattage; they usually range from about 90 watts at the low end through 250 watts at the high end.

power surge *See* surge.

power up To start up, or to begin a cold boot procedure; to turn on the power.

power user A person adept with computers, particularly on an applications-oriented level rather than on a programming level. A power user is someone who knows a considerable amount about computers and is comfortable enough with applications to be able to work with their most sophisticated features. Often power users are especially familiar with a specific type of application, such as spreadsheets or word processors, and can push these products to the limits of their capabilities.

PPM *See* pages per minute, pulse position modulation.

precedence In applications, the order in which values in a mathematical expression are calculated. In general, application programs perform multiplication and division first, followed by addition and subtraction. Sets of parentheses can be placed around expressions to control the order in which they are calculated. Programming languages, like the programs created with them, also follow orders of precedence. The operations, however, are more complex than those encountered with applications because of the languages' need to evaluate program code in terms of relationships, logic, and various internal rules of order. *See also* operator associativity, operator precedence.

precision The extent of detail used in expressing a number. For example, *3.14159265* gives more precision—more detail—about the value of pi than does *3.14*. Precision is related to, but different from, accuracy. Precision indicates degree of detail; accuracy indicates correctness. Thus, *3.14* is a more accurate value for pi than the more precise, but inaccurate, value *3.214*. *Compare* accuracy.

In programming, numeric values are often referred to as single-precision or double-precision values. The difference between the two is in the amount of storage space allotted to the value. Single-precision values, for example, might be contained in 4 bytes, double-precision values in 8 bytes. More storage space means that a number can be expressed with more precision. Hence, double-precision allows more exact values. *See also* double-precision, single-precision.

precompiler Also called a preprocessor. A program that reads in a source file and makes certain changes in order to prepare the source file for compilation. For example, the C preprocessor expands macro definitions and adds to the source file any files specified by *#include* commands. *See also* compiler.

preemptive multitasking Also called time-slice multitasking. A form of multitasking in which the operating system periodically interrupts the execution of a program and passes control of the system to another waiting program. Preemptive multitasking prevents any one program from monopolizing the system. *See also* multitasking.

prefix notation Also called Polish notation. A form of algebraic notation, developed in 1929 by Jan Lukasiewicz, a Polish logician, in which the operators appear before the operands. For example, the expression *(a + b) * (c - d)* would be written in prefix notation as ** + a b - c d*. *See also* infix notation, postfix notation.

preprocessor A device or routine that performs preliminary operations on input before passing it on for further processing. A program written in C, for example, is first examined by a preprocessor that performs operations such as replacing alphanumeric constants with values, expanding macros;